Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of applying a tone scale function T(x) that is compressive~~,~~ and expansive ~~or a combination of both~~ to a digital image, the method comprising:

a) decomposing the tone scale function into at least two ~~or more~~ composite functions that can be applied sequentially to the digital image, wherein the first composite function is $T_1(x)$, the second composite function is $T_2(x)$, and the tone scale function T(x) is substantially equal to $T_2(T_1(x))$, wherein x is a pixel value;

b) applying the first -composite function to the digital image with a tone scale applicator to produce a tone scaled digital image; and

c) applying the second composite function to the tone scaled digital image to ~~produced~~ produce an enhanced digital image.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 2, wherein the maximum slope of $T_1(x)$ is greater than or equal to the minimum slope of the second composite function $T_2(x)$ when plotted as a function of input versus output.

4. (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 3, wherein the maximum and minimum slopes of $T_1(x)$ and $T_2(x)$ respectively are equal to 1.

5. (Currently Amended) A method of applying a tone scale function T(x) that is compressive~~,~~ and expansive ~~or a combination of both~~ to a digital image, the method comprising:

a) decomposing the tone scale function into at least two ~~or more~~ composite functions the first being compressive, and the second being expansive that can be applied sequentially to the digital image;

b) applying the first -composite function to the digital image with a tone scale applicator with a spatial filter to produce a tone scaled digital image; and

c) applying the second composite function to the tone scaled digital image to produced an enhanced digital image.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the spatial filter is designed to remove noise, enhance or preserve detail or both.

7. (Original) The method claimed in claim 5, wherein the first composite function is $T_1(x)$, the second composite function is $T_2(x)$, the tone scale function is $T(x)$ and the tone scale function $T(x)$ is substantially equal to $T_2(T_1(x))$, wherein x is a pixel value.

8. (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 7, wherein the maximum slope of $T_1(x)$ is greater than or equal to the minimum slope of $T_2(x)$ the second composite function when plotted as a function of input versus output.

9. (Original) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein the maximum and minimum slopes are equal to 1.

10. (Cancelled).

11. (Cancelled).

12. (New) The method of claim 5 wherein the second composite function is applied with a second spatial filter.

13. (New) A method of applying a tone scale function T(x) that is compressive and expansive to a digital image, the method comprising:

a) decomposing the tone scale function into at least two composite functions the first being expansive, and the second being compressive that can be applied sequentially to the digital image;

b) applying the first composite function to the digital image with a tone scale applicator with a spatial filter to produce a tone scaled digital image; and

c) applying the second composite function to the tone scaled digital image to produced an enhanced digital image.